REMARKS

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 19-33 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 1-18 have been canceled by this amendment and claims 19-33 have been added as new claims. No new matter has been added.

Applicants note that a number of editorial amendments have been made to the specification for grammatical and general readability purposes. No new matter has been added.

In the Office Action, claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter, and claims 1-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Pershan (U.S. 6,968,050).

To facilitate the Examiner's reconsideration of the application, and to more clearly define the novel features of the present invention, original claims 1-18 have been canceled and have been replaced with new claims 19-33. Applicants submits that each of the new claims has been drafted to ensure compliance with 35 U.S.C. § 101, and that the above-noted rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) is inapplicable to the new claims for the reasons that follow.

Regarding the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 101, Applicants note that new claim 33 has been drafted so as to clarify that the medium is a "computer-readable storage medium", thereby distinguishing the medium from a "signal", and for clarifying that the password recovery program is executed within a computer.

Regarding the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), Applicants note that new claim 19 recites, *inter alia,* that a first receiving unit is operable to receive, from an external communication terminal device, a signed data set generated by digitally signing information for identifying a sender with use of a secret key; that an authentication unit is operable to read a public key from a public key storing unit and perform signature authentication using the read public key and the signed data set so as to judge if the signed data set has been generated by the sender; and that a reading unit is operable to read a password from a password storing unit when the authentication unit judges that the signed data set has been generated by the sender. Applicants respectfully submit that the Pershan et al. reference applied in the Office Action does not disclose or suggest such features.

Regarding Pershan, Applicants note that this reference discloses an authentication system in which a registration password is stored in a database along with a registered telephone number (see col. 4, lines 63-65). As explained in Pershan, in the event that a user who registered the telephone number forgets their registration password, the user can call the registration service telephone number from a registered phone and obtain their password (see col. 4, line 63 through col. 5, line 2).

Thus, while Pershan discloses the ability to recover a password utilizing a registered telephone number, Applicants respectfully submit that Pershan does not disclose or in any way suggest that a password can be recovered by utilizing a signed data set generated by digital signing information for identifying a sender with use of a secret key.

As such, Applicants respectfully submit that Pershan does not disclose, suggest or otherwise render obvious at least the features of a first receiving unit operable to receive, from an external communication terminal device, a signed data set generated by digitally signing information for identifying a sender with use of a secret key; an authentication unit operable to read a public key from a public key storing unit and perform signature authentication using the read public key and the signed data set so as to judge if the signed data set has been generated by the sender; and a reading unit operable to read a password from a password storing unit when the authentication unit judges that the signed data set has been generated by the sender.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that new claim 19 is patentable over Pershan, an indication of which is kindly requested. Claims 20 and 21 depend from claim 19 and are therefore considered patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

Regarding claim 22, Applicants note that this claim recites the features of a receiving unit operable to receive, from an external communication terminal device, a signed data set generated by digitally signing information for identifying a sender with use of a secret key; an authentication unit operable to read the public key from the public key storing unit and perform signature authentication using the read public key and the signed data set received by the receiving unit so as to judge if the signed data set received by the receiving unit has been generated by the sender; and a reading unit operable, when the authentication unit judges that the signed data set received by the receiving unit has been generated by the sender, to read the password from the password storing unit.

Regarding Pershan, as discussed above, while this reference discloses the ability to recover a password utilizing a registered telephone number, Applicants respectfully submit that Pershan does not disclose or in any way suggest the ability to recover a password utilizing a signed data set.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Pershan does not disclose, suggest or otherwise render obvious at least the above-noted features recited in claim 22. Thus, Applicants submit that claim 22 is patentable over Pershan, an indication of which is kindly requested. Claims 23-26 depend from claim 22 and are therefore considered patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

Regarding claim 27, Applicants note that this claim recites the features of a receiving unit operable to receive, from a communication terminal device to which a password recording medium is coupled, a signed data set generated by digitally signing information for identifying a sender with use of a secret key; an authentication unit operable to read the public key from the public key storing unit and perform signature authentication using the read public key and the signed data set received by the receiving unit so as to judge if the signed data set received by the receiving unit has been generated by the sender; and a reading unit operable, when the authentication unit judges that the signed data set received by the receiving unit has been generated by the sender, to read the password from the password storing unit.

For at least similar reasons as discussed above, Applicants respectfully submit that Pershan does not disclose, suggest or otherwise render obvious such features. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 27 is patentable over Pershan, an indication of which is kindly requested. Claims 28-31 depend from claim 27 and are therefore considered patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

Regarding claims 32 and 33, Applicants note that each of these claims recites the features of a receiving step of receiving a signed data set generated by digitally signing information for identifying a sender with use of a secret key; an authentication step of reading the public key from the public key storing unit and performing signature authentication using the read public key and the signed data set so as to judge if the received signed data set has been generated by the sender; and a reading step of, when the authentication step judges that the signed data set has been generated by the sender, reading the password from the password storing unit.

For at least similar reasons as discussed above, Applicants respectfully submit that Pershan does not disclose, suggest or otherwise render obvious such features. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 32 and 33 are patentable over Pershan, an indication of which is kindly requested.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may best be resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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